

Story #221 (Milli Kütüphane Tape)

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Location: Sivas

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The Substitute Bride

TEK  
Once there was and twice there was not, when God's creatures were and it was a sin to talk too much, there was an old woman who lived with her daughter, and her daughter was very beautiful. This poor woman did not long to enjoy her child, because she died within a few years, and the girl was left all by herself. Their house was far from everybody, by the side of a river down, down in a valley, and there were no other houses in sight except one where the ~~giants~~<sup>throughout</sup> lived.

When the giants heard the child crying, and saw that she was left all by herself, they took pity on her and brought her to their house. She worked there and she was very well taken care of. Every day the giants would go out to work, and the girl would tend the house. In the evening they would bring food and other things home, and take good care of her. To the age of fourteen she was brought up by the giants, and she was a very beautiful girl. But she never saw anyone except the giants.

One day, when she was all alone in the house because the giants had gone to their work, she heard some noise outside. The noise sounded like a wedding procession. She went out to see what was coming, and, indeed, it was a wedding. According to the custom of the country, the bride had been <sup>Wedding Ceremony</sup> put into a hollow 8-9 tree trunk with a woman to accompany her, and this tree trunk was being taken

to the bridegroom's house. As the wedding procession, with drums and trumpets and davals--tom-tom-tom-tom-tom--was passing the giants' house, the bride's companion saw the beautiful young girl standing there, and she quickly got out of the tree trunk and went toward her. Since the bride herself was a very, very ugly woman, her companion decided to take this beautiful girl along. She called to the girl, and said, "Look here. Would you like to have me take you to the wedding?"

The girl did not know what to do. She did not have a mother to care for her, and the giants were not at home, anyway. So she did not object, and went with the woman. The woman took her into the tree trunk with herself and the ugly bride. It seems the bride was being taken to the padişah's son, and when they arrived at the palace, all kinds of foods were served, and dancing and fun took place. It seems that the custom was to take this tree trunk right into the bridegroom's room, and so the tree trunk was taken there, with the bride, her companion, and this beautiful fourteen-year-old girl in it. The bride's companion, who was the one to present the bride to the bridegroom in the wedding room, thought to herself, "The bride is ugly, anyway. This is a very beautiful girl. Now, instead of the bride, if I give this girl to the bridegroom for the first three days, then however he sees the girl, he will go on seeing his own wife the same from then on. I shall give the young girl to him for three days, and then if I present him with the ugly one it may work better." She dressed and decorated the young girl, and, oh, she made the beautiful young girl even more beautiful, and she put her on a chair and said, "You sit down here and wait for the bridegroom. I shall make you a bride.

The poor girl did not know anything about what she was being asked to do. She was beautifully dressed, and the bride's crown was put on her head, and she was seated by the table. Then the companion went into the tree trunk where the

real bride was. When the bridegroom came into the room, he went to the bride and opened her veil, and when he saw a beautiful girl, beautiful as angels, oh, he was very, very happy. He offered her things to eat, and then they sat down and talked, and all that. Then the girl felt a little cold, so he went and brought a silken shawl and put it on her shoulders. There was also a family heirloom, a ring. He brought that, too, and put it on her finger. That night they were together, and the next night, and still for a third night. But it seems that the tradition was that the bride's companion was to leave after the third night, so the woman had to go back. On the third day, before she left, she took this fourteen-year-old child back into the tree trunk, and she got the real bride out and left her in the place of the giants' little girl. And off she and the little girl went.

That evening the bridegroom came into the room and saw his bride, and he knew that this was not the same person. She was dark and skinny and very tall, and she was nothing to look at! He felt very badly about it. Oh, he felt so badly about it he almost felt sick. So he ran to his mother and said, "Mother, are you making fun of me? How could you bring me this woman?"

"Why?" they said.

"You come and see what kind of a woman!" he said.

When the mother came to see the girl, she said, "Why, what's wrong? have been with her for all these three nights!"

"Oh, no," he said, "I have not."

"Oh, but you have been," his mother insisted. "Have you been imagining things? This is your wife. This is the one we went to get for you, and this is the one we brought for you."

The poor man kept on saying, "No! You cannot make me believe that! This wasn't the wife I had for three nights. She was different."

"Oh," they said, 'no. There is something different with you."

And he began to wonder whether he had been dreaming, or seeing things, and with this worry he became sick and fell into bed.

They kept on repeating, "This was your wife" and "This is the woman who *Love rich man* was with you for three nights," and he went almost mad, repeating, "It was not so. The woman I had been with was not this one," but he could not make anyone believe him. He did not even turn around and look at his bride's face. He was sick in bed, and the girl was just by herself. She worked around the house, and he did not care for her. He did not even look at her. He became more and more pale, and he lost weight, and finally he really had to be in bed. doctors came to give him medicines, but finally the doctors decided that he was not sick. There was nothing wrong with him, except that he was sick from worry. All he needed was fresh air. They said, "Put him in a <sup>coach</sup> carriage and take him to the side of the river so that he can get some fresh air. That will do him good."

He was very well taken care of, but nothing seemed to do him any good. One evening he called his lala <sup>11-14</sup> and said, "Please, Lala, tell them to get the <sup>coach</sup> carriage ready for me. I want to go for a ride." So they all got busy and prepared the carriage. He got into the carriage and they started to the river.

All this time, the little girl who was brought home could not believe herself. She thought that she had been seeing dreams all that time. The giants did not know how to speak with the girl, so they could not ask her where she had been all these three days. The girl could not decide whether she had been dreaming all those days, or whether it had really happened. She was in that state.

When the padişah's son came around to the place where the girl was, he asked what the place was and the lala said, "Well, this is the house where the giants live, and it is called 'Dere Vere' [meaning, "let the river give

When the lala said, "Dere Vere," there came a fresh and young voice from inside the house, "Oh, my prince, let God give you to me."

The prince said, "You said the giants lived here, but what I hear is a young and fresh voice. It cannot belong to the giants."

"Oh, no, my son," said the lala. "I am sure that the giants live here. I am positive that this is the place where the giants live. The only other place here is the little house right next door, where a very poor woman used to live, and she is not there any more because she died. Do not ever dare to go into that house. It is the giants' house, I know."

They went back to the palace, and that night the prince ate and slept, but his mind was all the time back at the giants' house. He could hardly wait for the next evening, and he asked the lala to get the carriage ready again. He wanted to go back there. They came back to the same place again, and he called, "Dere Vere!" The same voice answered, "My prince, let God give you to me."

"Oh, Lala," he said, "You are wrong. There is a voice coming from there. It cannot belong to the giants. It is a fresh and young voice I hear."

"Oh, no, my prince," the lala insisted. "No, no. You cannot, you must not go in there. It belongs to the giants, and the giants will pull you to pieces if you go in there."

For some days they kept on coming to that place, and the prince insisted on going in, but the lala would not let him. Finally the prince said, "All right. Let us go and come back tomorrow with a great deal of food. We shall put it outside and tell them to come and get it. Let us see who will come out!"

So they made pilav and they baked chicken, and they put the chicken on top of the pilav, and they put the lid on top of the platter, and they took it down to the river. The lala got out of the carriage and put the tray down on the ground, and then the padişah's son called out, "Dere Vere!"



The same voice came, "Oh, my prince, let God give you to me

The prince called again, "I have brought you food. Come and get it.

There was an old oxen skin. The girl put it on herself, and she put her arms and legs through the four legs of the skin, and on all fours she crept toward the tray and got it. The prince and the lala looked down from the top of the rocks and saw this creeping creature. The lala said, "Did you see? Did I not tell you there are no people living there? Did you see that creature? Look at those nails! That's what they would use to pull you to pieces

The prince was almost at the point of losing all hope, and they went in despair. After some time, the prince felt like going back again, and he asked the lala to go.

"All right," said the lala. So they went back there again.

When they arrived at the giants' house, they heard the sound of a rocking cradle, and a voice singing a lullaby to a baby, and a baby crying. The padişah said, "I will go in this time! I will go into the house." And though the lala wanted to stop him, he could not.

The padişah jumped out of the carriage and ran by the side of the water straight to the house. He climbed the stairs running, and went into the room from which the lullaby was coming. What he saw was a cradle with a baby in it. The silken shawl that he had given to the girl covered the baby, and the girl herself was sitting there with that family ring on her finger. He shouted, "Lala, come here quickly! I have found what I was looking for!"

The lala came running in. "What is this?" he said.

The prince said, "What is this? This is the woman I am married to. is the woman I saw. I did not even look at the face of the other one. She is not my wife. And this is my child. Look, Lala. This is the silken shawl I gave her that night, and this is the ring I gave her. And this is my baby."

So they took the girl, and he put his coat around her, and they took the baby. All of them got into the carriage and they came back. And the prince said, "I have found what I have been looking for. This is my wife, and the other one is not my wife!" he kept on saying. "I have not even looked at her. Let her be my sister or my mother. This is my wife," he said.

They did not hold a new wedding, because he said, "This is my wife. This is the one I married. I even have my child. And I never married the other one, so there is nothing against this wife." And they lived happily ever after.